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# The Resurrection of Jesus Christ Considered and Proved: And the Consequent Truth and Divinity of the Christian System Briefly Illustrated

Levi Hart

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1992

Sarah Marchant



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*Sarah Marchant. 1786.*

*The Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST considered and proved: And the consequent Truth and Divinity of the Christian System briefly illustrated.*

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I N A  
DISCOURSE,  
O N

I *Corinthians*, xv. 17.

Addressed to the Second Congregational Church in the City of *Newport, Rhode-Island*, at the Ordination of the Reverend WILLIAM PATTEN to the evangelical Ministry, and pastoral Office, over them. *May 24, 1786.*

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By *LEVI HART*, A. M.

Pastor of a Church in *Preston, Connecticut.*

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*We have not followed cunningly-devised Fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. 2 Pet. i. 16.*

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PROVIDENCE: Printed by JOHN CARTER, 1786.

*Beath of Wharfedale*



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A N  
ORDINATION S E R M O N.

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I COR. XV. 17.

*If Christ be not raised, your Faith is vain ;  
ye are yet in your Sins.*

**T**HAT the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are truths essential to the Christian system, must be evident to all who are not strangers to it. And it is no less manifest, that such is the connexion of the several parts of this divine religion, and their dependence on each other, that a denial of these fundamental truths subverts the whole—and the disbelief of the doctrines resulting from them, implies a disapprobation or misunderstanding of this foundation.

THE passage before us expresses the sense of an inspired Apostle on this subject, agreeably to what has just been observed.

THERE seem to have been some professors of Christianity at Corinth, who doubted or denied the doctrine of the resurrection.—To secure Christians against this dangerous error, and establish the opposite important truth, our text and the whole chapter appear to have been written.

THE



THE resurrection of our Lord Jesus being an undoubted truth among Christians, and acknowledged by those who denied that of the saints, it is assumed in the Apostle's argument——and, from this, he infers that of the saints, by a mode of argumentation not uncommon, and quite unanswerable. He reduces the opposite tenet to absurdity in this manner: "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

A FARTHER attention to this argument would be useful and entertaining, but not coinciding with the particular design of this discourse, we shall only observe, that the doctrine of our Lord's resurrection is fundamental to the Christian system, in such a sense, that the whole must stand or fall with it.

It is obvious, that if Christ be not risen from the dead, he can do nothing for his followers.——All the great and precious promises of his word must fail—as they are all founded on the supposition that he lives to accomplish them.

FURTHERMORE, it is evident that if Jesus did not rise from the dead, he is not the Messiah foretold by the sacred writers of the Old Testament.

THAT he is represented by these as a suffering, rising and reigning Saviour, is evident from many passages in their inspired writings; let it suffice at present to refer to what is said on this subject in Psalms ii. xvi. cx. cxviii. and Isai. liii.—From such passages as these we have abundant evidence that the Messiah was to suffer and die, rise and reign. If therefore he had not risen from the dead, he could not have been the Messiah promised to the



the church, in the Old Testament—and must have appeared to be an impostor, as well from those writings, as from the failure of his own prediction, so often repeated, of his rising from the dead.

AND his Apostles, who made this the grand article of their testimony, would have been found to be false witnesses of God—agreeably to the observation in the context.

THE preceding observations unitedly prove the importance of the doctrine of our Lord's resurrection, and the deep concern of Christians in the evidences of its truth.

To these let us give our serious attention, in the remaining part of this discourse.

THAT we may investigate the subject with the greater clearness, it will be proper to observe,

THAT the general series of facts recorded by the Evangelists, and in the Acts of the Apostles, is not disputed.

NEITHER Jews or infidels hesitate to acknowledge that there was such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, who was born, lived and died, at the time and in the manner represented by these writers :—That he wrought many wonderful works, while on earth :—And that he had a number of disciples, who asserted his resurrection from the dead, wrought miracles in confirmation of their testimony, and preached his religion successfully, in many countries.—As “these things were not done in a corner,” the time and various attending circumstances  
admitted



admitted no possibility of imposture ; and, accordingly, they were not denied.

It must also be remembered, that the sacred books of the Old Testament were received by the Jews, as divinely inspired. To the writings of Moses and the Prophets they appealed on all occasions. In these they believed a Messiah to be promised, and at the time of the mission of Jesus they were in expectation of his appearance.

THESE are, therefore, to be assumed as undoubted truths in the present argument.

THE way being thus opened, the evidences of our Lord's resurrection are to be exhibited in the following order :

I. That the divine Jesus rose from the dead is manifest, by the testimony of the Apostles and other eye-witnesses.

FROM the account of the several Evangelists, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, and the verse preceding our text, it appears, that Jesus manifested himself alive to several of his Apostles and disciples at different times and places, on the first day after they report him to have risen from the dead :—That he appeared to them, and conversed familiarly with them, on a great variety of subjects and occasions, for the space of forty days. And at length he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once, on a mountain in Galilee ; where he had informed them, both before and after his sufferings, that he would meet them\*.

THAT,

\* Matt. xxvi. 32. Mark xiv. 28. xvi. 7.



THAT, finally, he led them out from Jerusalem, to the bounds of Bethany, and having given them the necessary directions and blessed them, with uplifted hands, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, and a cloud received him out of their sight.—And, while they were looking up after him, behold two angels appeared, and assured them that the same Jesus, whom they had seen ascend into heaven, should come again in like manner as they had seen him go into heaven.

THAT these testimonies are decisive must be granted, if it appear that the Evangelists, and other witnesses, could not be deceived themselves, and could have no inducement to deceive others.—

FIRST.—That they were not deceived themselves, is evident from the circumstances of the history.—

THEY were not influenced to believe the resurrection of Jesus, from antecedent prejudice.—They neither believed that the Messiah was to suffer and rise again, nor did they expect the resurrection of Jesus.—They were thoroughly prepossessed in favour of a temporal kingdom, and earthly glory, to their master, even to the very last.

THEY admitted the evidences of his resurrection with the greatest caution; and not without personal knowledge, to the degree, as to be able to say, “that which we have heard from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the word of life.”—That which we have seen, declare we unto you \*.”

THEY

\* 1 John i. 1, 2, 3.



THEY had the best opportunity to know the truth, from the frequent interviews with which their Divine Master indulged them : Not only as individuals, in which case something might be allowed for imagination, but in companies, and these, in some instances, numerous ;——in one, more than five hundred.——And, from the free and intimate converse with which he favoured them ; from the instructions he gave them ; from the manner and circumstances of his ascension ; and the fulfilment of his promise, respecting the descent of the Holy Spirit.

THESE facts and events taken singly, exhibit unanswerable evidence of the truth to be proved ; how much more when viewed in their collected energy !

SECONDLY.—As the witnesses of our Lord's resurrection could not be deceived themselves, it is no less evident, they could have no inducements to deceive others.

NONE but men of the most dishonest hearts could attempt an imposition of this importance on the world, though sure of success ; as it must so greatly injure its votaries in their present and eternal interest, and bring down the divine wrath on the propagators of the falsehood. Dishonest men must have had a prospect of personal advantage, as the reward of their labour ; but what reward of dishonesty could be expected in the present case ? Could they hope for the pleasures, the profits, or the honours of this world, or for the divine approbation in the next ?—Nothing is more impossible ! They must have known that such horrible impiety incurred the curse of God in the world to come ! As well as that the propagation of such a falsehood (had it been  
so)



so) must render them the most wretched of men in the present life.

It is farther to be observed, that, had they not known the facts to be true, they must have been sure that the falshood would be detected.

In fine, to suppose the witnesses of our Lord's resurrection to have attempted to impose a falshood on the world, is to suppose them the most abandoned of all wicked men—to be governed simply by a regard to their own private, temporal advantage, and yet to pursue that course which they knew tended, above all others, to deprive them of all temporal good ; to plunge them into the deepest wretchedness and misery, while they lived ; and to be the certain way to a more dreadful destruction after death.—It must be admitted, therefore, that they could not be deceived themselves, in their testimony, or attempt to deceive others :—In other words, that we have the highest degree of proof of the resurrection of Jesus, which can, in any case, be derived from testimony.

PROOF which is ever considered as decisive among men, and the more so when no counter evidence is produced ; but on the other hand it is confirmed by proof of another kind—which we are now to shew is the case in the present argument.

II. THE resurrection of Christ is proved by the miracles wrought by his Apostles to confirm it.

By various passages in the Evangelists it appears, not only that Jesus referred to his resurrection, on the third day after his death, as the grand proof of his Messiah-



ship—but, from some of them, it is evident that his enemies, the Jewish priests and rulers, in effect, agreed to rest it on this also.—Therefore when Jesus was buried, they took no charge of the sepulchre till the third day was approaching. But then, coming to Pilate, they request a guard of soldiers to secure the sepulchre till the third day should be past. Saying, “we remember that this deceiver said, while he was yet living, *after three days I shall rise again*\*.” The guard was, accordingly, obtained, and the sepulchre secured. But the next morning the body of Jesus was not to be found in it. A report was soon spread abroad, as coming from the guard, that the disciples came by night and stole away the body while *they* slept.—Besides many other circumstances to invalidate this report, it was, at most, but a negative evidence. It contained a confession that the body was missing, and that they could give no account of the manner and circumstances. For, surely, they must be utter strangers to what happened while they were asleep. Such a report, therefore, could have no influence to invalidate the testimony of the Apostles, which has been already considered.

BUT it is now to be shewn that the apostolic testimony is supported by the most decisive evidence—by the miracles which they wrought in the name of Jesus, as the promised Messiah, and alive from the dead. Nothing is more certain than that they wrought the most indubitable miracles in his name, in great numbers, in the place where he was crucified, even at Jerusalem; and immediately after their report of his resurrection, while the many circumstances of his life and death were fresh in the memory of every one. Indeed, the facts are not disputed. That we may have a proper view of the

\* Matth. xxvi, 62—66.



the present argument, it will be requisite to consider the following particulars.

1. MOSES, the founder of the Jewish state, and their great lawgiver, who was superior to all the Prophets and teachers under the Old Testament, expressly foretold the Messiah, before his death, and pointed him out by this mark of distinction—viz. that he should confirm his divine mission by miracles, wrought in the name of the God of Israel.—The passage to which I refer is too long to be repeated at present. It is in Deut. xviii. chapter, from the fifteenth verse to the end.—But it evidently refers to the Messiah, and has been commonly so understood, both by Jewish and Christian expositors.

2. THAT the Jews, at the time of the incarnation of our Lord, expected the Messiah would prove his divine mission by miracles, wrought in the name of the God of Israel, and as being sent by him, is evident from their calling on him for this proof of his authority—when he purged the temple, and spoke and conducted in a manner expressive of his claim to a divine mission. “And they said unto him, what sign shewest thou unto us, seeing thou dost these things?” This was at the Jewish passover, when a vast multitude of the nation was collected. And, it is added, a little after, that “many believed on his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.” The like evidence of this truth may be collected from John vi. 14—30, 31, and many other passages, which we stay not to mention.

3. WE have equal evidence that Jesus admitted this claim as just, and founded on the scriptures of the Old Testament.—This appears from his referring them to his



his resurrection, on the third day, on the occasion already considered—from the course of miracles which he wrought—and the promise of the Spirit to his Apostles, in his miraculous operations.

4. It was therefore reasonable to expect, that, if Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah, and risen from the dead, his Apostles, who testified his resurrection, would be able to confirm it by miracles, wrought in his name. This was agreeable to the Mosaic dispensation, which distinguished those who were commissioned by the true God in this manner†.

It was also agreeable to the expectations of the Jews, and therefore peculiarly suited for their conviction.

AND it was what Jesus had promised to his disciples. And, *therefore*, to fail here, must prove them to be false witnesses. But to produce this evidence, must give plenary satisfaction to a mind not blinded by the most unreasonable prejudice.

THE Apostles, it is well known, produced this evidence in abundant plenitude; with all circumstances of the most undoubted reality, that had there been any kind of fraud, it must have been detected.

By this they exhibited a decisive evidence of the Messiahship and resurrection of their Master, and added confirmation to their verbal testimony: For surely God would not thus enable them to confirm an impious falsehood, by the very evidence which he had promised in favour of a truth the most interesting to his own glory, and the felicity of his kingdom.

† Compare Deut, xiii. 1—6, and chap. xviii. 20, 21, 22.



WE add another evidence.

III. THE Messiahship and resurrection of Jesus were confirmed by the success of the gospel, in the apostolic age.

It is well known, and hath been already observed, that the facts and events relating to the life, death and resurrection, of our blessed Lord, were published in the time and place in which they were said to exist; that there was every possible advantage to detect the fraud, had there been any; that the principal characters in the nation were sufficiently opposed to Christianity, to prevent the spread of it, had it been possible; that every national prejudice, and all worldly advantages, were on their side; and that they neglected no efforts in their power.

IN such circumstances, nothing short of the most full conviction of the truth and importance of Christianity could induce men to embrace it. Especially, as this must be done at the hazard of every earthly enjoyment, and even of their lives. Yet, in these circumstances, it is known that the gospel had a most rapid spread, in the city of Jerusalem. And, even "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith\*."

THE testimony of enemies in favour of a cause is, allowedly, the most decisive. But in the present case, this is given in a manner the most remote from a possibility of deception.

THE diffusion of Christianity from Jerusalem, to the remotest nations of Gentiles, as well as among the dispersed Jews, in opposition to all human power, by the preaching



preaching of the Apostles and their successors, greatly corroborates the evidence we are illustrating; and shews, at once, that the proofs in favour of the resurrection of Jesus must have been satisfying, and that a divine energy attended the preaching.

OTHER religions have been propagated by the sword, and other exertions of men in power, at the head of states and armies. Or they have risen up in some dark age or corner of the world, and been carried on by the subtilty of learned and designing men. But the circumstances which attended the diffusion of primitive Christianity, were just the reverse of all this. The power of the magistrate, the terror of the sword, the advantages of learning, and the circumstances of time and place, were all in the opposite scale.

NOTHING but truth could prevail in such circumstances. This argument might be largely discussed, but we will close it with an illustration drawn from a single instance. I mean the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul.

THIS distinguished man is known to have been possessed of the best accomplishments, natural and acquired. To a mind originally penetrating, sagacious and determined, were added the improvements of a literary and refined education. Having, at least, finished his education at Jerusalem, he must have been no stranger to the controversy occasioned by the spread of the gospel. And being exceedingly zealous in the traditions of the elders, and tenets of the Pharisees, he was soon distinguished by the ardour with which he entered into the opposition to Jesus of Nazareth, and his cause.

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HIS ambition, connexions and zeal, rendering him a fit person for the design, he was employed by the Jewish rulers, to seize the disciples of Jesus, and bring them to Jerusalem, for condemnation and punishment.

ON this commission he entered with the most fixed determination. And, in the execution of it, on a journey to Damascus, he was met with in a manner which gave an entirely new direction to his views and pursuits, through the residue of his life. The circumstances of this wonderful change are related in the Acts of the Apostles, chapters ix. xxii. and xxvi. and are too long to be repeated at present.

BUT it is important to observe, that from this time to his death, which was a course of many years, our Apostle continued steadfast in the faith of the gospel; and that through the most severe trials. He sacrificed all his worldly prospects, and all his former religious hopes, for the sake of the gospel, and on the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. He spent his life in the most unremitted exertions for the diffusion of Christianity, and finally sealed his testimony with his blood.

IN the near view of which he exulted, with a calm fortitude peculiar to conscious sincerity.—“I am, said he, now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day.”

1st



IN a review of the life, labours and writings, of this excellent man, it may be asked, is it possible that he should have been deceived himself, or designedly pass the cheat on others ?

THE most subtle adversaries to Christianity may be called upon, to name a single circumstance of credibility to the gospel, supposing it to be a reality, in the life of one of its votaries, which was not given in that of St. Paul—or to offer one objection of real weight against the validity of his testimony.

IF such be the force of the argument arising from *one* disciple and preacher of the blessed Jesus—what accumulated proof must be derived from the “cloud of witnesses,” in the apostolic age, to the resurrection of the divine Jesus, and the consequent truth and divinity of the Christian revelation ?

WE have now, very briefly, stated the three branches of argument for the resurrection of our Lord, proposed in the beginning of this discourse. And by these, it is presumed, the truth is sufficiently established. Other arguments might be adduced, and these more copiously illustrated ; but it is needless.—Let us then conclude the subject and discourse, with the following reflections.

#### REFLECTIONS.

##### I. THE Christian system is a divine revelation.

As it hath already been observed and shewn, that the whole gospel rests on the foundation of the resurrection of Jesus ; and as his Apostles were enabled to confirm this, by the most authentic evidence—we may be assured that the religion which they taught, as a revelation



tion from God, is genuine ; that it descended from heaven.

II. THE spread of the gospel, and the propagation of Christianity, in the apostolic age, not only evince the certainty of the resurrection of Jesus (as, otherwise, the fact would never have been admitted in such circumstances) but afford a proof of divine power displayed in favour of Christianity.

WE have abundant evidence that the first Christians embraced the gospel, at the risque of the loss of all things but Christianity itself.—And this, in opposition to the most inveterate prejudices, antecedently and deeply rooted in their minds.—And that they persevered in the profession and practice of this self-denying religion, through every extremity, to the last.

SURELY, there must have been the exertion of divine and supernatural power, thus to form and influence the hearts and lives of men, in a manner so opposite to the course of this world, and (with grief and shame we may add) to the temper and manners of the generality of professing Christians of the present time.

EDUCATED as we are, in the belief of Christianity, it may be accounted for, that we should acknowledge, in words, its divinity, while we neither feel its transforming power, nor submit to its laws. But in the circumstances of the first spread of the gospel, the innocent and holy lives, the persevering fidelity of the Christians, carried evident proof of the power of God. And to this we find the holy scriptures every where ascribing it.



WE add, that as like causes produce like effects—wherever we find men, at this day, exhibiting the genuine spirit of the gospel, it is to be traced up to the same divine origin. And to this they uniformly refer it.

III. BEING possessed of a divine revelation, we have no cause to be surprized, much less to doubt its veracity and importance; because it contains some things above our comprehension.

INDEED, had we been previously notified of a revelation to be given from heaven, containing a way of salvation at all suited to the condition of guilty man, this must have been expected. Such subjects as the incarnation of the *Eternal Word*—his atonement, resurrection, exaltation, and the way of salvation for sinners through him, are, indeed, above our comprehension. But are they also above the divine power and wisdom to effect? Or, are they unsuitable to the ends proposed in that revelation? Rather, do they not appear to be, in the highest degree, worthy of God, and to be essential and fundamental parts of a scheme the most perfect and glorious?

BESIDES, if an objection can be founded from hence against the Christian revelation, it will lie with no less weight against natural religion. For, this last is not less attended with incomprehensibles, than the other. Hence,

IV. LET us receive this divine system, with humble and devout acknowledgments.

LET us, who are the appointed preachers of it, adore the riches of that grace which gave it, and hath indulged us with the inestimable privilege of preaching it to others, as well as partaking in its treasures ourselves.

LET



LET it be our care that we possess and exemplify its excellent spirit ; and thus recommend it to our hearers in our lives, as well as in our doctrines.

AND let us be united, ardent and persevering, in application to the Father of Mercies, for that supernatural power and grace to attend our ministry, which shall cause this divine religion to spread abroad, and shine forth in its primitive glory.

IT remains that the discourse be concluded with the customary addresses, to the Pastor chosen by this people, and to the Congregation.

FIRST, to the Pastor elect.

DEAR SIR, you have the happiness to be engaged in the most important cause, and under the best master.

THE divine Jesus, who has given his life for his church, still walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and holds the stars in his right hand\*.

IN such a cause, and under such a master, you have the most animating prospects.—

BE it so, that you are unequal to the gospel ministry, (for who is sufficient for these things ?) the power and grace of the Chief Shepherd are engaged to support his faithful servants.

THE object of your ministry is to effect the purpose for which he died and rose again. You may have free access



access to him on all occasions. And, if you follow him, he will not forsake you.

THE affection and harmony of this people, in their call, give hope of success.—

You will be assisted by the friendship and prayers of your brethren and fathers in the Christian ministry; especially, of the venerable man who has reluctantly parted with this his beloved charge—though in compliance with pressing calls to greater and more extensive usefulness.

IN such views you will receive the solemn induction to the sacred office of a Christian Bishop. Confiding in the power and grace of Christ, you will prosecute the duties of your office with alacrity and zeal.

AND may “the good-will of him who dwelt in the bush” attend, and crown your labours with success.—And having “served your generation by the will of God,” when you shall be old and full of days, and piety, may you be gathered to your people; and have the distinguished blessing of those who have turned many to righteousness.

SECONDLY, to the Congregation.

—IT having pleased the Father of Mercies to restore you to the enjoyment of your habitations, and to each other, after the various calamities of the late war—and to unite your hearts in the choice of a successor to your late worthy pastor—it remains that you receive him with gratitude to the Most High, and attend to his ministry with the spirit of disciples of the blessed Jesus.

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—THAT you receive with meekness the ingrafted word. Having such a price in your hands to get wisdom, it is your part to improve it, and be wise to salvation.

POSSESSED of such decisive evidence in favour of Christianity, and being sensible of its importance to your own salvation and that of your families—and that the object of the gospel ministry is to promote it—you will attend, with your families, to the instructions of God's house. You will treasure up in your minds the sacred truths. You will teach them diligently to your children and domestics, and you will exemplify them in your lives.

THUS you will experience that “the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace”—and that godliness is profitable to all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come.

MAY the blessing of God ever rest on this religious society.—May the ministration of his word and ordinances here be crowned with abundant success.—May a Christian church and evangelical ministry flourish here, through all generations, down to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Finally,*

LET all the friends of Zion, with united hearts, pray for the peace of Jerusalem.—They shall prosper who love her.—

“PEACE be within thy walls, O Zion, and prosperity within thy palaces.—For our brethren and companions sake, we will now say, peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, we will seek thy good.”



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*The* C H A R G E,  
Given by the Rev. *EZRA STILES*,  
S.T.D. President of YALE-COLLEGE,  
and for many Years Pastor of this  
Church.

**I**N the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by authority derived from him as the great Head of the church, we, the ministers of the gospel, do separate thee, WILLIAM PATTEN, unto the work of the evangelical ministry; and by prayer, and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, do ordain and consecrate thee a Bishop in the church of God; and commit unto thee the pastoral charge and oversight of this church, and flock of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hereby giving and conferring upon thee *office-power and authority* to preach the gospel, according to the sacred scriptures; to administer sealing ordinances, *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*, to such as, according to the scriptures, are the proper subjects of the same; to dispense the discipline of the church; to ordain Elders in every city; and to perform the whole work of the evangelical ministry wherever the Providence of God shall call for your labours, and particularly in this *Congregational church* and society, which have given thee a call to take the pastoral charge and oversight of them in the Lord.

AND now we charge thee before God, the holy angels, and this assembly, that thou *make full proof of this ministry, which thou hast received of the Lord Jesus*, to fulfil the same.



same. Thou hast desired the office of a Bishop, and thou hast desired a good work. Thou lovest Jesus and his flock; feed, therefore, his sheep, and feed his lambs. Take heed unto thyself, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made thee an overseer, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood\*. Preach the word: Be instant in season, and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine†. Faithfully dispense the words of eternal life. Declare the whole counsel of God, and see to it, that thy whole flock be well instructed in the things of the kingdom; in the glorious system of the doctrines of grace, and the redemption of the cross.

IF thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine‖. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity§. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which is given thee by prayer, and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Meditate upon these things. Give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and to thy doctrine. Continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee†.

RELY not upon thine own strength and wisdom; but upon the influence of unerring wisdom, the wisdom from above. Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus¶.

AND the things which thou hast heard and learned of Christ, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able

\* Acts xx. 28. † 2 Tim. iv. 2. ‖ 1 Tim. iv. 6. § 1 Tim. iv. 12.  
† 1 Tim. iv. 14—16. ¶ 2 Tim. ii. 1.



*able to teach others also. Lay hands suddenly on no man*\*; but remember thou, that in transmitting office-power, and in designating and ordaining Bishops in the churches, thou art executing an high and holy betrustment, of infinite moment to the salvation of souls, and for which thou must render a solemn and awful account to the great Head of the church. Commit thou, therefore, this ministry to men of grace, learning, and holiness of life; to the lovers of the blessed Jesus, and the lovers of his flock. Be not thou instrumental of introducing into the vineyard indolent, ungracious or unskilful labourers.

Look well to thine own soul : Keep well thine own vineyard, and attend closely to a prayerful and holy walk with God. Maintain an habitual intercourse with heaven, in mental devotion, sublime meditations, and the other exercises of the spiritual and divine life. Be thou assimilated to Jesus. Be thy life *hid with Christ in God*||. Study not so much to *appear*, as indeed to *be* really pious and holy, in all manner of conversation. Faithfully visit the flock. Watch for, and be continually embracing, opportunities of dispensing divine and salutary counsels. Be thou ever clothed with an amiable *benevolence*, that, in thy visitations, thy people taking knowledge of thee, that thou hast been with God, *may behold thy face, as it had been the face of an angel*§. Conciliate their esteem, and their affections, by convincing them that their best good lieth near thy heart. *The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.* As much as possible *follow after peace with all men*†. Heal differences and animosities with counsel, lenity, wisdom. In the discipline of God's house, avoid church-censures as much as possible : When necessary, let them, however, be inflicted with faithfulness, indeed, yet with

pious

\* 1 Tim. v. 22. || Col. iii. 3. § Acts vi. 15. † 2 Tim. xi. 22.



pious mildness, and without a haughty irritating severity. Let the *law of kindness dwell upon thy tongue* \*. With diligence, and love, and tenderness, cherish thou the lambs of the flock, and assiduously form the rising generation to virtue and holiness. Feed them, and the whole flock, *with the sincere milk of the word* †, instead of learned disquisitions upon the deep, mysterious and incomprehensible points in divinity. And since, in every assembly of common Christians, few have reached to high attainments in either *doctrinal knowledge*, or *experimental religion* and the divine life, avoid too frequent illapses into metaphysical niceties and casuistical discussions : For however these may be occasionally well, and edifying, and even profitable to a *happy few* of eminent holiness, who are advanced, by abounding grace, to a singular intercourse with heaven ; yet will they overshoot and lose the multitude of plain, sincere and humble Christians, in the clouds of incomprehensible darkness, and *unintelligible truth*. Preach thou more, even much more, the plain and practical, than deep, doctrinal divinity : And the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Make the scriptures the man of thy counsel, and speak thou as becometh the oracles of God. Take these as thine only rule : From them declare thou the *whole counsel of God*. *Call no man master on earth : One is your master, the Lord from heaven*. Bow to the wisdom of revelation, and reverence this alone. By this the man of God shall be *thoroughly furnished to every good work*.

*THIS charge commit I unto thee, in the name of the Lord.*

*WATCH thou in all things ; do the work of an Evangelist ; make full proof of thy ministry. Study—not vain*  
D  
*glory*

\* Prov. xxxi. 26.

† 1 Pet. ii. 2,



glory ; but to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Thus shalt thou save thy soul, and the souls of those that hear thee. Thus shalt thou be precious in the eyes of this dearly beloved flock, and in the eyes of the Lord. Thus standing in thy lot, and ministring in holy things, with persevering fidelity, thou shalt stand approved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Be thou, therefore, faithful unto death : And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, thou shalt receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away, 1 Pet. v. 4. — AMEN.



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The RIGHT HAND of FELLOW-SHIP, by the Reverend *ENOS HITCHCOCK*, of *Providence*.

**I**T is a well-known maxim in the Congregational churches, that no particular church has any right to exercise dominion over another ;—that there is no comparative rank between them ;—but that they are entirely independent of each other, until combined together by mutual and voluntary compact.

INGENIOUS and respectable reasonings have been urged on either side of the question.—And while we acknowledge the weight of those arguments, which have been employed against the sentiment, and the merit of their authors, we still adhere to the equality of the ministers and churches of Christ—and upon this sentiment proceed all our church discipline, and ecclesiastical counsel.

THIS we do, not from a spirit of opposition to others, but from an opinion—that priority among churches opens a dangerous door to the lofty views of ambition, which rest not satisfied with any thing short of universal dominion ;—is apt to inspire with high ideas of pre-eminence, and raise contempt for those who resist any claims founded on supposed precedency ;—creates an intolerant spirit ;—and is often the source of great bitterness and party rage.

As equality in churches has a tendency to prevent the malignant influence of these passions, and all their  
fatal



fatal effects, so it seems more congenial to the spirit of Christianity ;—sets it in a more just and amiable light before men ;—is more conducive to the promotion of virtue and piety in the church ; of tranquility and happiness in the world.

ON this principle is founded the ceremony of *The Right Hand of Fellowship*, used at the consecration of those who offer themselves to the service of God, in the gospel ministry.—

THIS token of equality in rank, and of fraternal affection, was given by the Apostles to those whom they invested with the sacerdotal office, and sent forth to be ministering servants in the kingdom of Christ.—The ceremony is plain and simple, but significant.—It speaks for itself ; and, therefore, needs no great comment.—It is a token of friendship ;—a pledge of mutual affection, and reciprocal service ;—an acknowledgment of the person's good standing in the church ;—of the regularity of his introduction into office as a minister of Jesus Christ ;—and expressive of the full equality between the ministers of his religion, and the Christian societies with which they are connected.

WITH a full persuasion of these things, and in the exercise of that Christian liberty of which we do not wish to deprive others, I give you, My Brother, this *Right Hand*, by direction and in behalf of the Ecclesiastical Council convened on this solemn and chearful occasion—not as an idle ceremony, but accompanied with the warmth of affection. A friendly and sacred pledge of our reception of you as a Christian minister, of equal rank with any other minister of Jesus Christ :—And an acknowledgment of the equal rank of the church,



church, to which you have now been designated, with any other Christian church.

By this significant rite, attended with our real wishes for your welfare, we tender you our services as opportunity shall offer, or circumstances require ;—and engage to render you every office of faithful and generous friendship, by our countenance, support and assistance, in the right and prudent discharge of your duty.—By this token, we bid you welcome to this part of our Lord's vineyard ;—we wish your days may be many and prosperous ;—your labours successful ;—your improvements conspicuous and perpetual ;—your piety ardent and exemplary ;—your virtue a bright assemblage of every good and amiable quality ;—your usefulness extensive ; and your reward glorious in the kingdom of God above.

HAIL auspicious day, which brings tidings of joy to this Christian society, and crowns this church with a spiritual guide !

It must afford real pleasure to every benevolent heart, to behold the success that has attended their laudable efforts to repair this house of worship, which an hostile invasion had laid waste, and restore it to its present beauteous order and condition\* ;—to see it this day replenished with the Christian ministry ;—and to observe the harmony and regularity with which this happy event has been accomplished. “ Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion ;” so “ are the feet of them who bring glad tidings of good things, who preach the gospel of peace.”

WE

\* N. B. It was taken for an hospital while the British army were garrisoned at Newport, and used for several years.—The pews taken down, and left in a very ruinous and desolate situation.



WE felicitate you, brethren, on the present joyful occasion.—That after a long dispersion, and being almost crushed by the tyranny of war, in which period your late worthy and beloved Pastor was called to other important services, you have been restored to your own city, and liberty;—to your social standing in the Christian church;—and to the well-established order of the gospel.

“WHEN the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, ye were like them that dream. Then was your mouth filled with laughter, and your tongue with singing. Then said they, among your enemies, the Lord hath done great things for them.” How did your hearts echo, in grateful strains, “the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad!”

MAY your “peace be as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea!”—May you have encreasing reason to rejoice in the transactions of this day; and shew the strength of your affection to *this* your servant in the Lord, by your attention and candour towards him, and the steady practice of virtue and piety.

PEACE be within your walls, and prosperity within your dwellings! The God of peace be with you all. AMEN.



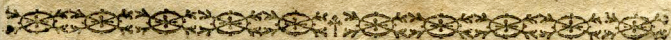


Mr. *PATTEN*'s

S E R M O N,

The LORD'S-DAY succeeding his

ORDINATION.





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REVELATION ii. 10.

---*Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.*

**T**H Y vows, O God ! are upon me. How important are the duties of my situation, and how solemn the obligations under which I am laid ! If I be *unwise*, or guileful, the *blackness of darkness* awaits me ! But if I be *faithful*—hail ! the animating thought—I shall receive a *crown of life*.

**C**ALLED, my brethren, to reflect more immediately upon the words of our text, from their being repeated in the solemn *Charge*, which, the last week, was given in your presence, to my soul ; from their being the dying expression of the venerable guardian of my childhood ; and from their being peculiarly applicable to my present situation ; I hope for your approbation in the choice of a subject, and that you will allow me the liberty of adapting my observations to my own obligations and encouragement, as well as to the general improvement of those who may hear me.

**O**UR text is one of those passages which evince that the *command of God is exceedingly broad* : It contains the whole of our duty, as men and as Christians ; and it likewise implies the sum of those blessings with which the *believer* will be rewarded, a *crown of life*.

THE



THE passage is to be considered in the order of its own language ; we will, therefore, begin with the words,

I. *B E thou faithful.* Thou, myself, art interested in the obligation ; thou art an immediate subject of the command : Notwithstanding I am placed as a monitor, yet to myself must I apply the duties which I represent to others, and to myself address the motives by which I would persuade my fellow-men to an observance of religion.

*THOU*, in the text, does not, my brethren, confine the command to myself, or to one individual character to the exclusion of another ; but it is used to denote that the duty is *personal*, and that no one may think himself an exception. With respect to the duty with which it is connected, it may be observed in the first place, that, as men, we are under many obligations, and have much to perform, in order that we may be *faithful*.

LIFE is an enjoyment which we did not acquire, and the continuance of which we cannot secure : It was given us by God, and it is supported by his agency : Since the Almighty hath been pleased, in a sovereign manner, to call us from nothing into the number of his works, and to continue us among them, it is but suitable that we should be subservient to his designs.—That the obligations under which we are laid are great, and that we have much to perform, will appear, if we attend to the endowments of our nature,



As we are *human*, it becomes us to pay a higher attention to our feelings, than the lower orders in creation can bestow : As we are *rational*, it becomes us to act in a more elevated manner, and with respect to nobler ends, than those to which the instinct of animal nature would aspire : As we are *social*, it becomes us to exercise the affections towards their proper objects—it is suitable that we feel the ties by which mankind are connected with each other, and that we exercise that general benevolence which is due to our fellow-men : And as we are *moral agents*, and thus, in all the endowments of our being, accountable to God, to be *faithful*, implies that we discharge our duty in the relation which we bear to him ; that we make his glory the ultimate end of all our rational exercises, and the great object of all our moral actions ; that we give to him the empire of our hearts ; that we make his law the rule of our life, and his favour the subject of our most ardent wishes.

2. To be *faithful*, implies that we discharge those obligations which arise from the favours which God hath conferred upon us.

WE are his as he hath given us life, and our obligations to him are heightened by the continuance of life : They are increased by every blessing of his Providence : They are peculiarly enlarged when he sees fit to distinguish us in his goodness from others, and they have acquired infinite weight from the gift of his Son, and from those important blessings which compose the privileges of the Redeemer's purchase.



IN view of *these*, the Apostle *Paul*, unable to express the indispensable claims which the Almighty hath upon us, is induced to omit those which result from the gifts and blessings of nature as lost, in comparison with the obligations which arise from the riches of grace, and therefore says, *ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.*

THE death and mediation of the Redeemer call loudly upon us to submit ourselves to God : The advantages of a religious nature with which we are favoured—the *law* and the gospel in writing—the example of Christians—the institutions of religion, and the influences of the Holy Spirit, invite us, with additional pleas, to the same duty, and heighten the obligations we are under to be *faithful* ; for is it not expected of the *vine*, which enjoys the advantages of cultivation, that it bring forth the clusters of praise ?

3. To be *faithful*, implies that we discharge those obligations, of a religious nature, which we take upon ourselves.—

IN every resolution, in favour of religion, we lay ourselves under obligations to become virtuous ; but in making a profession of religion, our obligations to this are finally, and in a high degree, confirmed. Indeed in fulfilling the obligations which we are under as professing Christians, we shall discharge our duty in the various respects which have been before mentioned : We shall be grateful to God for life—we shall employ, in a suitable manner, the faculties of the mind, and the emotions of the heart—we shall have a just sense of the favours which  
God



God hath conferred upon us, particularly of the grace which is displayed in the gift of a Saviour : We shall devote ourselves to God through this glorious Mediator, and strictly regard the duties of religion. I would observe,

4. ONCE more, that to be *faithful*, implies that we discharge those duties which are connected with our particular relations in a religious sense.

IN addition to the general laws of Christianity, and a profession of religion, there are duties which result from our relations to the church. These duties are often of very great importance, not only in themselves, but to the interest of Christianity ; and to be negligent in these, will as effectually exclude those, who may be guilty of the inattention, from the reward of *life*, as an infringement upon more general moral obligations will professors, as such, or mankind at large.

THEY, my brethren, who would be *faithful*, must comply with their duty in the various respects which have been named :—They must walk in the ordinances with which they are indulged, in the commands with which they are made acquainted, and fill the stations in which they are placed, blamelessly. Religion has respect to the heart, as well as to the conduct ; and to the whole of our behaviour, as well as to particular actions. Unless we conduct from worthy motives, as well as in a consistent manner, we shall not be approved ; and to be partial in our practice, would be an error in the whole.

W.



WE must not exercise the feelings, and perform the services which have been represented, for a season only ; but assiduously, even unto death.

## II. Be faithful *unto death*.

WE must not look forward to the end of our labours till we go to the land of our fathers, till we have made our bed in the grave. The duties which are incumbent on us have respect to the whole duration of our lives, and reach the silent tomb : No moment is unattended with the highest of obligations, and none but those who persevere, and are *faithful unto death*, will receive the *crown of life*.

THIS would not be so important a consideration, were it not for the degeneracy of human nature, and the embarrassments of the present state. The trials which we have to undergo in the Christian course, the difficulties with which we have to struggle, are so great, that the saint is represented, in scripture, by those who are called to the hardest and most distressing services ;—by those who *toil*, that they may *reap* ; by those who *run*, that they may reach the *prize* ; and by those who *fight*, that they may obtain the *victory*. In those toils must we be engaged—in that race must we press forward, and in this warfare must we be good soldiers, till we bid adieu to terrestrial scenes, and go—*whence there is no return*.

FROM the same expression, which implies that the duties to which our text has reference respect the whole of life, permit me to observe, that our fatigue will not extend beyond this state, but is bounded by the



the tomb ; *be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the imperfections which we now feel, and the trials which we now experience, yet beyond the grave there will be nothing to molest us. Beyond the gloomy mountains, over which we have to toil, the scene will be pleasantly plain : Beyond the dreary valley, through which we have to pass, there never will be any thing on which our feet shall slide. Is there not animation in the thought ? —Our fatigue must soon end. Is yonder declining sun forever to shine ? Or yonder fields, will they forever bloom ? Is the labourer doomed to endless day ? Or must the weary pilgrim despair of respite ? May we not rather say, soon will the evening of release be spread, and soon the weapons of our warfare be laid aside ; soon will our eyes be closed upon the light of heaven, and our feet have passed the *tearful vale* ? Uncertain as the *vapour* is our life : Frail as the *grass* is our flesh :—*In the morning* it springeth up, and *flourisheth*—it arrives to its maturity at noon, and at *evening it withereth*, and is gone. This short space, my brethren—this period of time, is the only season in which we have to *endure hardness*. The scene will soon be closed : The stage is short, and our progress rapid : If we be *faithful* through this momentary term, sorrows will be soothed from our breast, and then we shall receive the *crown of life* !

III. *I WILL give thee a crown of life.*

LIFE, in the connexion in which it is here placed, has respect to all the blessings which can be enjoyed



in existence. It is opposed to those tribulations of which in the context the saints are forewarned ;—*fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, and ye shall have tribulation ten days : Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* By promising them *that* which is opposed to the evils which they were to suffer, it is implied, that in all those respects in which we are destitute of perfect happiness in this state, we shall, if we be *faithful*, be fully recompensed in the next.

THAT *life* includes all the enjoyments which can make existence happy, may be inferred not only from the sense of the term in the connexion of our text, but from the general meaning of the word in scripture, and particularly from the consideration, that *death*, in the sacred writings, is used to denote, not a deprivation of existence, but evils which will make that existence a curse.

A *CROWN of life* may imply that the blessings which will be conferred upon us will be distinguishing, and that they will be lasting. *Life* is not our *crown* in this state : Its gold is tarnished, and its diamonds are many of them gone. It is not our crown, but a ruddy flower, which brightens upon the bosom a moment, and fades : A verdant garland, which wantons around the temples for a while, and then withers away.

It is said, *I will give thee a crown of life* : Though it be promised as a reward, it must, indeed, be considered as a gift : Our best services and our severest sufferings cannot merit so high an acknowledgment.

It



It is a gift, as it far exceeds the worth of the most deserving in the human race, and as, in a compliance with those conditions upon which it will be bestowed, we are dependent upon the divine assistance; by this we are enabled to be faithful, and so to persevere as that we may receive a *crown of life*.

*A CROWN of life!* What can there be greater than this promise? What is there fair, what is there animating, which is not enwreathed within this circle? Without this beauty is a statue, and joy a name! Without this reason is subverted, and every pleasing exercise is at rest! Without this prospects no longer charm, and *being* is no more!

THE *crown of life* will be conferred by *Jesus Christ*. He is the illustrious person who speaks in our text.—In giving the command, he styles himself *the First* and *the Last*—the command he has, therefore, authority to give: He maketh the promise in the character of *him*, who was *dead and is alive*—the promise he is able to fulfil. The reward he will bestow upon the *faithful*, at death, and the crown he will establish, forever, on their heads, when he shall say to the righteous, *come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom* prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

PERMIT me, my brethren, to say to you, this *crown* is already finished, and that it awaits your heads, if you be faithful unto death.

EACH one, in this assembly, is interested in the promise: Each one is under obligations, and must, unless he be inexcusably to blame, perform services which



which have respect to this reward. *A crown of life* awaits each faithful one, while *everlasting shame* will confound the disobedient. Wherefore, consider the end of your conduct : Consider the wide alternatives of the future state ; in a particular manner, consider the inestimable worth of the *crown of life*, and be induced to be *faithful*.

For a temporary gratification, resign not the everlasting raptures, which await your bosoms in the courts on high ! Pursue not the deceitful visions, which must shortly vanish, to the neglect of those finished prospects which spread, and swell, and deepen, into an immortal *beauty*, in the other world ! And beware, lest the foliage of time should cheat your brows from the crown of life ! But be *faithful* : Be faithful to yourselves : Be faithful in the relations which you sustain : Be faithful in discharging the obligations which you are under to God—particularly those which result from the gift of his Son ! Regard the obligations which you have voluntarily taken upon yourselves, and be *faithful unto death* ; then your happiness will be complete, and forever secure : The numerous orders of bright angels will welcome you to their blessed abodes ; and finally, before assembled nations, and the attending universe, the great Redeemer will confess you *his*, and call you to his seat : There you shall *sit down as conquerors*, and your *crown will be life* !

SUFFER me, my brethren and friends, to apply the text to my own circumstances ;—its injunction to my duty ; and its promise to my encouragement,



It hath pleased the Most High, in connexion with your request, to place me in a situation which I must be sensible is superior to my merit, and to which I feared to aspire.

WHILE I was gratefully surprized with the divine goodness, and your candour, in the answer which you gave to my address, I trembled at the duties to which that answer called me; and as my contemplations led me forward to the important station, my heart recoiled lest you were mistaken in your proceedings, and lest I were advancing to an height from which I should fall. I did not dare but own my obligations to devote myself to the gospel ministry. Sensible that I was *not my own*, and that my usefulness depended solely on God, I endeavoured to follow the line of conduct which he drew;—and since he is pleased that I should bear the *sacred office*, and hath placed me *here*, I would reverently bend the knee to his *sovereignty*, and adore his grace: I would humbly acknowledge the obligations of my character, and gratefully own this situation as my home. And how happy am I——indeed, I am inexpressibly happy, that I may hail you, my friends, as those with whom I have to associate through my pilgrimage in life, and whose interest it will ever be my duty most ardently to pursue: That ye are those, in whose service I am to *spend, and be spent*, and whose tears will finally bedew my urn.

LET me consider the duties belonging to the office with which I am invested, and that result from the relation I now sustain.

IN



IN being *faithful*, I have to study the will of God ;—to discharge my duty in the various respects in which I was before under obligations ;—and to be faithful unto death.

As a *minister of the gospel*, I have to publish the plan of salvation ;—to recommend *Jesus* as the Saviour of sinners ;—and to display heaven as the home of believers.

IN being a minister of the gospel in this place, I have to be careful, not only that in my method I do not offend a refined taste ; but that my discourses be intelligible to the cursory attendant.

I HAVE to consider, that I watch for the *soul* : That I am a monitor with respect to the important duties of this life, and the consequences which await us in the next ; and, in being *faithful*, I have impartially to exhibit the various truths which are revealed in the sacred writings : Nothing must be kept back ; nor may any thing be misrepresented.

I HAVE to address myself not only to the hopes, but to the fears of my hearers : They must, sometimes, if I be *faithful*, find me a *Boanerges*—and, perhaps, when they expected to find me a *son of consolation*.

I MUST not only represent the truths of the gospel, in an impartial light ; but conform myself, as far as it shall be in my power, to the various characters with which I may be connected ; and that I may win some, I must represent religion in various lights, to different ages : To the young, it must be described



described as the ornament and joy of youth ; to the aged, as the dignity and the consolation of years ; to the grave, she must be presented in her plainer dress ; and to the gay, with her wreath of flowers.

I HAVE, likewise, to be careful that I do not preach myself : That I be anxious to display the principles of Christianity ; and that it be my aim to recommend religion, in the most forcible manner, to your acceptance.

IN being a minister of the gospel, I am placed more immediately over this *church* of Christ. I have to take heed that it be regular, that it be pure, and in the eye of Christianity undefiled. I have to administer in it the ordinances of the gospel ; to *feed the sheep*, and——to *feed the lambs*. Those who go astray, I must follow, and endeavour to recover from their wanderings : Those who are doubtful, I must endeavour to establish in the truth ; and those who are strong, I must still encourage.

IN order that I may be *faithful*, I have to devote myself entirely to the business in which I have engaged : To study not my own inclination, but your dispositions : Not my own ease, but your prosperity ; and in pursuing *this*, I have to be willing to suffer any distresses in my own person, and I must not *account my life dear to me*. I must pursue my duty, unerringly : Your praises must have no *charm* against my walking strictly ; nor must your censures grieve me from the will of God.

IN being a minister of the gospel in this church, I succeed *one* who was worthy of your love, and who  
was



was assiduous in your service: A venerable *father*, whose mind is liberally endowed, and whose improvements are singularly great: Whose name is established in the courts of *fame*; and whose praise is known in the churches. In addition to the services which belong to my office in itself, I have to set before me this example; and while I reflect upon the duties of my situation, to consider *whom I succeed.*

In being *faithful* in my office, I have to guard my own heart;—to be careful that my life correspond with my principles. I have to be meek, to be harmless, and to be holy; and to give an example in all things, so far as shall be in my power, of that conduct which becometh the Christian.

FINALLY, in order that I may be *faithful*, I have to act as in the presence of God. I have to approve myself to your consciences, as well as to your tastes; since your consciences only can be my witnesses in the *great and terrible day of the Lord*. I have to realize, that I must shortly *appear before God, and Jesus Christ*; and that to *Him*, and in the presence of the holy angels, I must *give an account of my ministry*; and that my final sentence will be inconceivably heightened, either to my happiness or misery, according to my conduct in the relation which I now bear to you!

ARE *these* the solemn consequences of my being invested with the office of your pastor? Are *those* the important duties which I have to perform? How *serious*, indeed, is my situation! And feel with me, my brethren, under the melancholy reflection,



tion, that I am far from being qualified for the trust ; and that I can scarcely hope but that I shall, in many things, offend against my duty ; and that many failures will expose me to those *rayless shades* which may justly hide, forever, the unfaithful ! How arduous is the task for so weak a hand ! How conspicuous the situation for so fluttering a taper ! How important the duties for so frail a mortal ! Why—but now it is too late to recede from the task : Repentance here would be looking back ; and I would not thus before-hand ensure my condemnation ! Let me look forward, then, my brethren ; it becometh the Christian to look forward—and

Lo ! a *crown of life* is before me, if I be *faithful unto death*.

If I place my trust in God : If I seek his light and assistance, and attend to the precepts of his word : If I do what in me lieth to discharge the duties of my station, and trust to the *divine mercy*, I shall be acknowledged, through the grace which there is in Jesus, as *faithful* : My happiness will be high in the future world ; and never, never, never shall I doubt again. I shall be happy in myself : I shall be happy with the venerable father in whose steps I must tread : I shall be happy with my parent, who has gone before me, fallen in the midst of life, and from his dear connexions : I shall be happy with you, my brethren,—and with the general assembly which will meet in heaven : I shall be happy with Jesus Christ, and in the presence of God.—But in order that I may enjoy these favours, I must be *faithful*. The *crown of life* is a sufficient inducement to this—and the various encouragements which are afforded me are my hope, and animate me while I reflect upon the difficulties of my duty.



FROM these encouragements I am not only contented, but happy in the allotment of Providence in my present situation. Were I still at liberty, and free from all connexions, I would yet choose the office which I bear, and the situation in which I am placed. The services to which I am called shall be my delight—and here my home. Here are my wishes fixed, and nothing but heaven can wean my affections from it.

My heart scarcely knows, as yet, the feelings it will exercise towards you. It has, however, already awoke, and allows me to stile you

By names of *high esteem, fathers—of indissoluble regard, brethren—and of love* which is stronger than death while I address my *sisters* !

Your names shall ever rest upon my heart. Your interest shall be the first object of my pursuit. No service shall be tedious to me which will promote your advantage : No sacrifice shall be dear to me which will administer to your happiness: Your peace shall be the subject of my wishes, my labours, and my prayers.

This will be my employment, and I seek no higher, I wish no happier.—My days will be worthily spent in such a service—may they thus be spent !—And when the silent hour has come, and the messenger of death shall lay his cold hand upon my breast, and bind my head in forgetfulness, may my love for you ascend from my falling nature, and await you in the mansions of light !

NOTWITHSTANDING the reward which is promised in the text is future, still this does not exclude me  
from



from blessings which may be desired in this life.—  
Among the favours of a temporal nature, which the goodness of God, and the ideas I entertain of you, my friends, would lead me to expect, I shall ever set the highest value upon your *friendship*.

LET candour still preside, as it ever hath done, in your conclusions upon my character. Consider my youth, my brethren : Consider my inexperience : Consider the various anxieties which will necessarily attend me in my situation, and be gentle to my feelings : Spare my name, and let me not be disheartened from those resolutions, which, with all the encouragement you can give me, I shall be but feebly able to execute.

PERMIT me not barely to ask your friendship, but to entreat that in your addresses to God you would ever *pray for me*—and request that I may be thoroughly furnished for the important services to which I am called : That I may be favoured with the light of the divine wisdom, as my guide into all truth ; with the strength of the divine arm, as my support ; and with a sense of the divine favour, as my consolation.—Then I shall be strong, though destitute of these I am weak : I shall quit myself like a man, and be *faithful unto death*.—And may the Lord in mercy hear your prayer ! May he finally pronounce upon me the high eulogium, *well done*, and admit me into the dwellings of his love : May I there find *you* an object of my still more refined and exalted affections—and may I thus be *crowned with life*, through Jesus Christ.

BLESSED be the name of the Lord, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, henceforth and forevermore. A M E N,



## EXPLANATIONS.

**P**AGE 3—line 11. *Guardian of my childhood :*  
 —My grandfather, the late Reverend President *Wheelock*, who soon after the death of my father, and when I was but about *twelve* years of age, took me into his family, and trained me under a tender inspection till his own decease; which will forever distinguish in my feelings the 24th of April, 1779.—With the passage, which is the subject of this discourse, upon his tongue, he expired.

P. 13—l. 7. *My address :*—In consequence of being honoured with proposals of settlement.

P. 16—l. 9. *Whom I succeed :*—The Rev. President *Stiles*—whose absence, when this sermon was delivered, allowed the author the privilege of introducing the preceding remarks—and the liberty in which the author thought himself justified in the pulpit, he hopes will be pardoned from the press.

P. 17—l. 26. *From his dear connexions :*—The late Reverend *William Patten*, of Hartford, in Connecticut. He deceased January 16, 1775, ætat. 37.